

Diary 3 - 20 June 2010

It never rains around here...

In Northeast Greenland it is said to never rain – but the dew can fall very heavily and in a kind of patchy pattern and the snow in summer can melt before it hits the ground... Another week has passed in Zackenberg and as always many things have happened.

In this week we could quit skiing. The only suitable place now is on the sea ice but it is getting very wet with puddles of melted snow. Also, the mosquitoes have come out for earnest to the dislike of most but Claus. They are important pollinators and that is exactly what he is here to study. They are also helping him stay awake and alert and he can no longer lie nonchalant and watch his flowers but have to move about a little, trying to avoid them on himself.

Jeroen and Jan arrived Tuesday and are finding Sanderling nests high and low. Jan is a newcomer to Zackenberg and is here to help out Jeroen. He looks a bit tired at dinner time but Jeroen's team have always been the ones with some of the highest mileages. Gergely also came Tuesday and continues where Tomas left, working day and night to catch caterpillars and feed them. Gergely was here last year too, but this year he will do both the catching and rearing alone for a hectic 3 weeks.

Julie has been struggling again this year with technical problems, but she got the methane station up and running in record time – assisted only a little by Jannik who helped her carrying some of the equipment out into the field. Otherwise Jannik has been busy emptying arthropod traps in between starting the yearly breeding census of the birds in the research area.

Spanggård and Jon have been working hard to keep the station running. I wish for them they had more time and luck with the weather to go out and enjoy the wonderful nature. The same goes for our lovely chef Dina who has kept spoiling us all with delicious food and bakery.

I have been setting up our GPS system, checked for snow cover, plant phenology and fox breeding activity. It seems there is breeding in at least 3 of our known dens. The long tailed skuas do not seem to be breeding though according to the authorities. This could give an early indication that there are not many lemmings. This again could give the foxes a hard time and perhaps they will be harder on the bird nests and nestlings. Jeroen and Jan have already lost a few nests to fox predation.

We just had some mm of rain and snow yesterday but hopefully it will be dry enough in a few days that we will be able to set up our climate manipulation experimental plots.

That's all for now!

Lars Holst Hansen (BioBasis)

Out, ZAC!